

Death was believed to enhance the power of the spirits who ruled meteorological phenomena. The notion was that insects caused meteorological phenomena; then they were gods ; the insects and beasts gave to the gods the magic power which they (insects and beasts) once had over rainfall, etc. The humming bird which hibernates and wakes again in spring was thought to cause the heat of summer. Therefore it was taken to be an envelope of the war god. Free flow of blood lets loose magic power. Hence the great bloodshedding in the Mexican cultus. " Human sacrifice is in Mexico the same in sense as beast sacrifice. In both cases, magic powers, magic beasts and spirits, are killed." By death new birth with greater magic power becomes possible.¹

609. Motives of child sacrifice. The Semites adopted the world philosophy which lies back of human sacrifice and incorporated it with their religion, which thereby became gloomy and ferocious. What a man must sacrifice was what he loved most, and that was his firstborn child. It was rationalizing to argue that a beast could be substituted with equal effect, and we often find that people who had advanced to that point of philosophy, when face to face with a great calamity showed that they did not believe that the effect was equal. They went back to child sacrifice.² The Hebrews in the seventh century thought that they felt the wrath of God and they tried to avert it in this way.³ Tiele thinks that there is no evidence of child sacrifice or of the temple consecration of women in the Euphrates valley in historical times, but in Syria and Arabia child sacrifice lasted on in spite of the culture of the Aramaeans and Phoenicians. In old Arabia

fathers burned
 their little daughters as sacrifices to the goddess.⁴
 Human sacri-
 fices were used for auguries before any important
 enterprise, and
 as thank offerings for victory or success. Every
 year a num-
 ber of children of the foremost families were
 sacrificed as an
 expiation for the sins of the nation, " while
 fiendish music
 drowned their cries and the lamentations of their
 mothers."⁵

¹ *Globus*, LXXXVI, 117-119.

² Possibly 2 Kings iii. 27; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; Pietschmann,
Phoenizier, 167.

³ W. R. Smith, *Relig. of the Semites*, 465.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 370.

⁵ Tiele-Gehrich, *Relig. im Alterthum*^ I, 212, 240 ; Maspero,
Peuples de P Orient^
 I, 680; Sanchuniathon apud Euseb., *Prep. Evang.*, I, 10.